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REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON UTILIZATION OF MATERIAL IN THE DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRES

Your Committee appointed to report on the utilization of material in the draft questionnaires has not confined its inquiries to the draft questionnaire files, but has taken into account as well other questionnaire and record material of economic significance now in the custody of different government offices.

In the mass, this material undoubtedly constitutes an original record of economic conditions and phenomena during the war of permanent value, provided it can be located, preserved, indexed, arranged, and made accessible.

As regards effective utilization of this material by students in the future, the immediate problem is clearly one of determining the character of the material and its physical disposition. This work of locating and indexing questionnaire files and other war record files, your Committee believes must be done by a government agency, and it believes that the agency which may most properly undertake the work is the Council of National Defense, which has already taken over into its custody the valuable files of the War Industries Board.

Your Committee would call attention to the fact that these files of questionnaires and records represent the activities of economic and statistic services which were built up as temporary emergency war services and which have been very largely demobilized during the past year. In some cases the custody of these files now devolves upon temporary skeleton organizations and in other cases has been transferred to one or another permanent government office—the Fuel Administration records, for example, to the Bureau of Mines, and the War Trade Board questionnaires, in part, to the Foreign Trade Adviser in the State Department. The War Labor Board decisions are in the custody of the Department of Labor. The Food Administration files will probably be turned over to the Department of Agriculture.

The present disposition of some of these files is indicated in the statements appended to this report, which have been prepared by the custodian of records of the Council of National Defense and, as regards the draft questionnaires and army records, by the Chief Statistical Officer of the Statistics Branch of the General Staff.

This accumulation of material, which exists now largely in a raw state under rather uncertain, provisional, and precarious custody, presents a broad field for research, and your Committee is of the opinion that it is of vital importance that the records of our economic mobilization for war and of the economic phenomena of war shall be surveyed, indexed, and arranged, so as to be made available for utilization by students who may in the future undertake special lines of research.

Among the files to be brought under such survey are those of such agencies as the Council of National Defense, the War Industries Board, the War Labor Board, the Industrial Relations Section of the

Emergency Fleet Corporation (including records of the Shipbuilding Wage Adjustment Board), the Railroad Administration, the Food Administration, the Labor Administration in the Department of Labor (including the War Labor Policies Board, Women in Industry, industrial conditions, etc.), the Committee on Public Information, the Finance Corporation, the War Department draft questionnaires and the army and navy records (including records of the industrial service sections, army ordnance, signal corps, and quartermaster general). Finally, in so far as they can be made available, the special compilations and researches made under the direction of the State Department for the use of the President and Commissioners to the Peace Conference should be brought under survey.

As is pointed out in the statement appended to this report, the draft questionnaires and army records provide data for analyses and compilations of very considerable significance as regards especially public health, occupational classification, and other characteristics of the male population of draft age.

Your Committee would call attention further to the fact that a Joint Committee of the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association, and the American Historical Association on providing a Government Archives Building has been appointed; and this Joint Committee has, as we are informed, interested itself in the disposition of the files of the temporary war boards and services. We would recommend, therefore, that the matter of making a survey of the questionnaire and record files in the custody of direct government offices be referred to this Joint Committee, with the recommendation that if it seems feasible the Council of National Defense be requested to undertake a complete survey and indexing of such files, and undertake also the custody of such files in cases where the custody has not already been or may not more advantageously be devolved upon some other permanent government office.

If this report is accepted and approved, we recommend that this special committee on utilization of questionnaire material be discharged, and that a copy of this report, with appended statements, be transmitted to the Chairman of the Joint Committee on a Government Archives Building.

JOSEPH A. HILL,
WILLIAM F. WILLOUGHBY,
JOHN CUMMINGS, *Chairman.*

APPENDICES

STATEMENT BY CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE

The dockets of the National War Labor Board constitute exceedingly valuable material on wages, hours, working conditions, shop committees, methods of arbitration, etc. There are over 1200 of these dockets. A very few sets have been collected, bound and indexed by the Bureau of Applied Economics, Washington, D. C. (a private agency). These sets include, in addition to the official dockets, collateral material printed locally, as for instance, the booklets in the case of the Bridgeport plan. The Food Administration files still

repose in the Food Administration Building. The Fuel Administration files are deposited, pursuant to Executive Order, in the Bureau of Mines. The files of the Committee on Public Information are deposited with the Council of National Defense.

On July 22, 1919, the files of the War Industries Board were transferred by Executive Order to the Council of National Defense. At the time of transfer these files were contained in 435 steel file cabinets. The War Industries Board comprised some eighty odd units or sections, which may be grouped roughly as regulating distribution, prices, as pertaining to production of certain finished products and to production of certain raw materials, respectively.

Distribution was regulated by priority, clearance, and allocation. There are some 205,000 priority certificates and applications on file, which in themselves represent a large body of information concerning industrial plant capacity, etc. In 1916 and again in 1918 an industrial inventory was made of plants having a specified producing equipment. Some 30,000 of these inventories are on file.

The material concerning prices and price fixing represents probably the largest body of similar material in this country. In addition to the original material used in compiling the well-known fifty-seven Price Bulletins, there is a large quantity of original material collected by the Price Fixing Committee relating largely to costs. The Minutes of the Price Fixing Committee and its conferences with the trade constitute valuable economic source material; of the conferences, 146 were held between March 15 and December 12, 1918.

Both the finished products and the raw materials over which the War Industries Board had jurisdiction were chiefly those vital to war needs. Many weekly and monthly reports were exacted from the trade by the Board, by means of which its policy of distribution was determined. In addition to these regular reports a large number of questionnaires were sent out. These concerned production, capacity, conversion, and standardization. Four hundred and three different questionnaires have so far been recovered from the files, sorted, arranged, and indexed.

STATEMENT BY THE CHIEF STATISTICAL OFFICER, STATISTICS BRANCH OF THE GENERAL STAFF

Some 23,000,000 men were registered for the draft. Of these apparently some 10 or 12 million made out the questionnaires, which gave many details in regard to their residence, place of birth, race, citizenship, education, trade skill, etc. Some studies of the data contained in these questionnaires were made by the Office of the Provost Marshal General and the results are found in the published reports of that officer. These studies related only to the records of the men who were called to service and were not at all complete even for this class. Furthermore, many interesting inquiries which apparently could be answered from the data embodied in the questionnaires had never been undertaken. These questionnaires, together with the registration cards and other records of the draft are stored in the Washington Barracks, this city. There is at present no plan for making any further statistical study of this enormous mass of material.

In the files of the Adjutant General in this city are various records consisting principally of qualification cards and service records of men who served during the war. There are also the records accumulated by the Adjutant General's Office of the A. E. F., containing information in regard to the service of the men who went overseas. The number of men dealt with in these records is in the neighborhood of four million and the number of individual cards or service records is several times four million. The reduction to usable statistical form of the data contained in these records may seem perhaps to be a matter chiefly of interest to the War Department rather than to the general public. Nevertheless, there is evident a great deal of interest on the part of the general public in questions relating to the composition of the war army.

This office is in almost daily receipt of letters asking for information like the following:

Number of college men in the army and proportion who were commissioned.

Number of men skilled in various trades who served in the army.

Number of men who entered the army as enlisted men and afterwards commissioned.

Number of soldiers of various nationalities and races.

In addition to general questions like the above affecting the whole army, many inquiries are made in regard to the number of men serving from various cities, counties, and congressional districts and these inquiries usually relate to particular classifications of men similar to those mentioned in the previous paragraph. At the present time it is a very simple matter to find the complete military record of any individual who may be named because the system of filing in the Adjutant General's Office has been developed principally with that point in view, but it is almost impossible to get any answer to questions such as those above enumerated.

The Navy Department has a system of punched cards on which are recorded a vast number of details in regard to all the men who served in the Navy during the war and for many years previously. By the use of this system the Navy is able to answer questions of the character under discussion, usually with great promptness and a high degree of accuracy. It is very unfortunate that a system of this kind was not put into service in the War Department in the spring of 1917. Even today it would be well worth all it would cost to put in such a system covering at least the officers and enlisted men who actually served during the war.